

Minute of the Meeting of North Ronaldsay Community Council held in North Ronaldsay Community Centre and via Teams on Monday, 11 December 2023 at 19:30

Present:

Mr P Donnelly, Mrs H Scott (via Teams), Mr I Deyell, Ms A Duncan, Mr C Kerlake and Mr I Scott.

In Attendance:

- Councillor H Woodbridge.
- Councillor M Thomson (via Teams).
- Mr R Mackay, Head of Planning and Community Protection.
- Mr A Rodwell, Head of Improvement and Performance.

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1. Apologies

Resolved to note that apologies for absence had been received from Mrs L Paterson and Councillor S Clackson.

2. Adoption of Minutes

The minute of meeting held on Monday, 30 October 2023 was adopted being proposed by Ms A Duncan and seconded by Mr I Deyell.

3. Matters Arising

A. Kirkyard Grass Cutting Tender

Following a discussion about the Council's reduced budgets for grass cutting tenders, which is different for different islands, and the need for community councils to pay any amount awarded above the set amounts budgeted for, members agreed that the Old Kirkyard was a difficult area to cut and required strimming as much as mowing to maintain it. It was also mentioned that the CC owned machinery was found to be too heavy for the previous contractor and this may need addressing in future. It was suggested that the CC owned machinery must always be stored in the Old Kirk Shed and not at contractor's homes. Following further discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note the information provided.
2. That Mr C Kerslake with assistance from Mr I Deyell or Mr P Donnelly would find the current location of the CC owned machinery and put to the Pier so the Clerk can arrange for their annual servicing.
3. That the Clerk would advise MLM agriculture that the fuel would need emptying from the mower.
4. That the new tenders be advertised, and the deadline shall be Friday, 17 February in order to have time for a contingency plan should there be no applications.
5. That the tenders be for 1 year only.

B. Cattle Floats

The issue of the ongoing question of responsibility of the new floats was discussed. There was a further discussion on the misuse by some islanders of the floats and an immediate need therefore to set some boundaries. It was acknowledged that the reason for the CC being given the floats was to replace the previous service by Orkney Ferries of loose transportation of cattle from the island to the Mart, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk write a code of practice/conditions of use and send round the members to amend or edit prior to making it public and given to anyone requesting the use of the trailers.
2. That the Clerk should share this information with OIC.
3. To note that a meeting had been arranged with the Head of Improvement and Performance, the Service Manager, Democratic Services and Communications, and NRCC members on Wednesday, 17 January 2024 to have an initial meeting about the issue, which would include visiting the pier and trailers, with view to inviting discussion by stakeholders at another date after this.
4. That whether fees should be chargeable for using trailers would be discussed after the January meeting.
5. That the Clerk should write to the last user who had not returned the trailers to their parking area, have left them in an inappropriate area on their property and not been cleaned, and provide them with the new conditions of use.

C. Plane/Ferry Mobility Access

Following a discussion about access by people with mobility issues of both plane and non ro-ro ferries, and a pilot project that took place under Liam McArthur MSP, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that it would be in the interests of both the Scottish Government and Loganair if a middle ground form of transport could be available in these cases that was neither the expensive to run air ambulance, nor the usual scheduled plane.
2. That information was needed on whether all or some of the seats removed from the plane would enable/allow a wheelchair user to access the plane with the aid of manual handling equipment.
3. To ask what the options were regarding moving people from chair to plane seat since Fire crew were not allowed to “handle passengers” due to the potential for misinterpretation.
4. To seek companies who specialise in finding solutions to specific problems who might be able to work on this issue.
5. To request a meeting with the Airport Manager, Representatives from SAS, NHS Orkney and Loganair, the Chief Pilot, Councillors and Representatives from each affected island (North Ronaldsay, Papa Westray, and Graemsay (ferry related)) to discuss the above points and the need for accessible transport.
6. To include in the meeting the justification for a third plane - and that it should include accessibility as a matter of course and that if it met this need it would save the Council money in the long term, avoiding the need to call out the comparatively more expensive air ambulance service.

7. That this first meeting be a small focused group to get the details of the issues involved and a further meeting involving other organisations/stakeholders could then be organised.

D. Air and Ferry Forum Meeting

Despite the last minutes indicating that there was a request for the previously promised meeting between the Chair of the Development and Infrastructure Committee and the North Ronaldsay CC Transport Representative, this had still not been arranged and was again requested, to discuss all the issues raised and that were not addressed during the Transport Forum Meeting in September 2023, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk forward the past correspondence between NRCC and OIC regarding the request for a Special Meeting – to discuss all the issues left out of the earlier Forum Meeting, to Councillor H Woodbridge and the Head of Improvement and Performance.
2. That the Clerk repeat the request that a meeting be arranged between the NRCC Transport Representative and the Chair of the Development and Infrastructure Committee.
3. That this meeting additionally addresses the new issue of the island needing a scheduled 2nd freight plane each week, during the winter months when ferries are liable to be cancelled due to adverse weather as the number of families with young children have increased dramatically in the past year and the maximum capacity of the freight plane is unchangeable and limited to 750kg.
4. That point three was requested on a trial basis for 1 month; NRCC recognise scheduled flights are easier to organise than ad hoc flights but acknowledge that the schedule may already be congested and capacity to deliver this service may pose problems.

E. Pier

The dismantling of the cattle holding pens was discussed as its permanent removal now posed a health and safety issue regarding the holes that held the uprights on the pier, which were now a trip hazard especially for people with small feet (i.e. children) and the fact the removable metal covers did not remain in place - being displaced every time there was a high sea. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk would take photos and forward to Democratic Services to ask them to make the relevant officers aware and seek a more permanent remedy now the holes were not required.

4. Correspondence

A. Business Gateway

A proposal for representatives to come to the island to talk to residents interested in becoming self-employed had been emailed on 20 November 2023, and it was:

Resolved to note that the Clerk had shared this with the wider community.

B. National Islands Plan PhD Student's Survey

Correspondence had been emailed on 10 November 2023 regarding a PhD study on the Scottish National Islands Plan, and it was:

Resolved to note the deadline had passed.

C. Scottish Boundaries Commission - Second Round

Correspondence regarding amended boundaries had been emailed on 10 November 2023, and it was:

Resolved to note the content of the correspondence.

D. Review of Grass Cutting Tender Costings

Correspondence had been emailed to members on 28 November 2023, advising of budget cuts in the kirkyards budget meaning that limits were being imposed on the amounts that could be provided from Council budgets, and it was:

Resolved to note this had been discussed earlier in the meeting.

5. Consultations

A. Children and Young Peoples Centre for Justice Survey

Correspondence had been emailed on 28 November 2023, and it was

Resolved members could fill in online survey before the deadline of 21 December 2023.

B. Draft Local Transport Strategy

Correspondence had been emailed on 4 December 2023 regarding a consultation on the local transport strategy, and it was:

Resolved that members could read the documents online and offer any comments before 12 January 2024.

6. Financial Statements

A. General Finance

Members considered the General Finance statement as at 5 December 2023, copies of which had been previously circulated, and it was:

Resolved to note that the estimated balance was £19,664.41.

B. Turbine Fund

Members considered the Turbine statement as at 5 December 2023, copies of which had been previously circulated, and it was:

Resolved to note that the estimated balance was £21,644.80.

C. Community Council Grant Scheme

Following consideration of the Community Council Grant Scheme statement as at 5 December 2023, copies of which had been previously circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the main capping limit had £1,409.04 remaining for approval, £743 remaining in the additional capping limit and the island capping limit had £719 remaining.

D. Community Development Fund

Following consideration of the Community Development Fund statement as at 5 December 2023, copies of which had been previously circulated, it was:

Resolved to note that total available for allocation was £3,656.00.

E. Seed Corn Fund

Following consideration of the Seed Corn Fund statement as at 5 December 2023, copies of which had been previously circulated, it was:

Resolved to note that total available for allocation was £232.

7. Financial Requests

Resolved to note that there were no financial requests to consider.

8. Reports from Representatives

A. Transport Representative

Resolved to note that all topics had been covered earlier in the meeting.

B. Planning Representative

Resolved to note that the representative was absent but had communicated that had been no applications relating to North Ronaldsay since the last meeting.

C. North Ronaldsay Development Trust Representative

The NRDT Representative advised that the project at Trebb was well underway, including regular daily air travel by the contractors' building team. The old airfield waiting room had been approved to be used as the builder's welfare room during the project. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

D. Health and Care Representative

One of the Representatives was currently off island because they had been on the interview panel for the new NHSO Head of Primary Care Services. Members heard that the two new ANPs were now installed into their rota on the island, and residents were happy to again have consistent and reliable medical cover. It was announced that there would be a procedure drawn up for future recruitment requirements so that the island would not suffer the same disturbance to service it had endured since the permanent ANP resigned.

There had been a Resilience meeting regarding transport for people needing to go to hospital appointments. There was further discussion about the lack of and requirement for First Responders on the island and a suggestion that all the islands without First Responders could put a joint bid in for funding, through their Development Trusts. There had been issues about preliminary funding being turned down by SAS on the basis they did not want to be tied to an ongoing commitment to fund it once that ran out. SAS would provide all training and equipment but no salary. Meanwhile SFRS did not feel they should have to take up the slack on a permanent basis. Following further discussion, it was

Resolved:

1. To note that Councillor H Woodbridge, acting on behalf of NRDT, suggested that the Development Trust would be happy to take the joint application forward.
2. To note that Councillor H Woodbridge stated that if the issue reached no resolution, then she would take the matter to the Health and Care Committee at the Scottish Parliament.

E. Yarn Company Representative

Resolved to note there was nothing to report.

9. Publications

The following publications had been made available to members and were noted:

- Letter from School Place - October and November 2023.
- VAO Training and Funding Update - October 2023.
- VAO Newsletter - October and November 2023.
- Orkney Ferries Statistics - October 2023.

10. Any Other Competent Business

A. Scrap Dumped Near Airfield

The minuted item from the last meeting was questioned on any further follow up, and it was:

Resolved to that SEPA had been informed and were following their investigation procedures, and it was not the responsibility of the NRCC to continue to follow up this issue.

B. School Road

The minuted item from the last meeting was queried on whether there was an update regarding who is responsible for mending the pot holed road that leads to the school and community centre, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk would ask the Head of Asset Management, Property and Facilities, if they had found any further information from Education on funding to repair this road.
2. That the issue be made a priority as any child might come to harm, or vehicle undergo serious damage traversing the road as it currently stands.
3. That the Clerk provide public information to residents that any road issue including water laying on certain stretches of road which may cause driver to aquaplane, or skid during icy periods in winter can be reported directly to the Council and accompanying photos are always helpful.

C. Playground at North Ronaldsay School

Mr C Kerslake advised that he was seeking more funding to get the Playground Project underway with assistance from North Ronaldsay Community Association, who were helping source match funding. Regarding the previous enquiries by NRCC which had been answered via email, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that planning may be needed and will be included in the funding bids.
2. To note that Insurance will be covered by the Schools own insurance.
3. To note that previous Development Plans for the island had included provision of a playpark- so it was considered an important asset for the island.
4. That the Clerk would provide Mr C Kerslake with a letter of support indicating the NRCC had allocated £1,000 towards the project.

D. Ferry Replacement Programme Consultation

Late correspondence had been received and circulated from OIC that Laura Cromarty and David Hibbert were scheduled to visit on Thursday, 18 January 2024 from mid-day to discuss the issues with the North Ronaldsay Community Council and residents. There was an invite for anyone willing to feature in a video being filmed to talk about the importance of the new ferry fleet, and it was:

Resolved that the clerk would respond and make necessary arrangements for the meeting.

E. R100 Vouchers and Fast Fibre Broadband

Late correspondence had been received and circulated from OIC about the state of play regarding internet service provision for Orkney mainland and the outer isles. It was apparent that North Ronaldsay was not included in any of these plans. Further to a discussion about the current main NR internet provider offering to lay fibre within island as part of this scheme, it was pointed out that this would not necessarily increase the speeds significantly since the signal would still leave and be transmitted to the island via radio waves, as was already the case. However, it was advised that the main power cable between North Ronaldsay and Sanday was set to be replaced soon, and this would provide an opportunity for cable to be laid under sea between the islands at the same time. If fibre is not installed on island in advance of this the Scottish Government imposed "deadline" for carrying out the works may expire, and the island would be left with no other company offering to do the work. The point was also made that the current company may lay the fibre, but this does not commit islanders to use them as their service provider, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk invite Cloudnet come to a Public Meeting on North Ronaldsay in the New Year. Time, date and venue to be arranged.
2. That the OIC Head of Digital Services be invited to attend in order to discuss the future of fibre in relation to island.

F. News from Head of Improvement and Performance

It was acknowledged how hard community councils work and how important they are to their communities. There was a desire to improve the level of support offered to CCs and in communication with them - acknowledging the numerous times requests had not been responded to historically. The Head of Improvement and Performance recognised Covid had had a significant effect and halted face to face meetings of Chairs and Clerks, which had not resumed, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk request a new laptop, or a repair, as the microphone did not function; additionally, the keys and touchpad had been very unresponsive since it was received.
2. To request that the provision of a Link Officer be requested again, given how helpful they are to the smooth running of Papa Westray's Community Council.
3. That online Chair meetings would resume in the New Year and that a face-to-face meeting for Chairs and for Clerks would be arranged for later in the year.

G. NILPS Core Path Stiles Project

A member enquired on news of this given it had been understood a contractor had been found to do the work yet the stiles remain in a hazardous state of disrepair, and it was:

Resolved that the Clerk would ask the islands NILPS Representative for an update.

11. Date of Next Meeting

Following consideration of future meeting dates, it was:

Resolved that the next meeting of North Ronaldsay Community Council would be held on Monday, 19 February 2024 at 19:30, with the venue to be confirmed.

12. Conclusion of Meeting

There being no further business the Chair thanked everyone for attending and declared the meeting closed at 22:31.